(b) to (d) The total shortage of officers in Army, Navy and Air Force during the last three years is as under:

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force
1999	13684	993	1770
2000	14202	965	1856
2001	13744	964	1860

With the opening up of the economy leading to new vistas of lucrative job opportunities in the civil sector, coupled with relatively risky and hazardous career in the armed forces, there has been some impact on youth's preference for a career in the armed forces. The premature retirement of officers in the three Services is mainly on account of supersession, on medical and extreme compassionate grounds.

Several steps have been initiated by the Government. An Image Projection Campaign of the Army was launched during 1997-98. The campaign has made a positive impact on the availability and selection of candidates. Steps have been taken to continue the campaign.

Sustained publicity efforts are on to attract talented youth to join the Air Force. About 3000 schools and colleges are on the mailing list for sending the publicity material. Schools and colleges are visited regularly for administering motivational talks.

Increased publicity and candidate friendly recruitment procedures have been adopted by Navy in addition to general publicity and motivation drives.

Training courses for anti-germ warfare by DRDE

315. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Defence Research and Development Establishment (DRDE) propose to conduct training courses for anti-germ warfare in view of the Anthrax scare;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the fresh steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to combat bio-terrorism and give civilians a helping hand to grapple with bio-terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Four training courses of 4 days duration to officers of State Governments has been planned in the last week of November 2001. Each batch will have theoretical and practical sessions to deal with various aspects of problems.

(c) Government has circulated general instructions on the subject to all authorities of health Departments of centre and State/UT Governments and hospitals. These instructions inlcude likely method of dissemination of biological and chemical agents, incubation period, lethality, availability of vaccines, anti-microbial therapy and treatment. The other measures include conducting awareness workshops, dissemination of information through print and electronic media and reviewing the situation regularly.

Strategy for self-reliance in spares for IAF

316. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any strategy to lessen the Indian Air Force's dependence on foreign suppliers for spares;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government is facing problems in getting spares from abroad due to closure of production units especially from the erstwhile USSR;

(d) if so, how IAF is managing the spares; and

(e) the measures adopted to achieve self-reliance in the field?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A committee with representatives of IAF, HAL, DRDO,